

February 24, 1975

Lewis for purposes of closing debate by way of reply.

SENATOR LEWIS: Mr. Chairman, let me just go through briefly what we are attempting to do, and, first of all, let me say the reluctance I had to come before you with this piece of legislation. I'd much rather the situation be handled through normal processes but I've met on a number of occasions, we have had a joint hearing trying to resolve the problem. The situation in Nebraska today in special education is this. A number of your local school districts are in trouble and I have got a stack of letters that, as they say in Ada, a mile high. Let's say we have a problem. The problem is twofold. First of all, a lot of local school districts who have met the requirement that you asked for are not receiving their money and they are in a tight financial bind. Secondly, many school districts that could not provide the service because of size, location, et cetera, have contracted, either with service units or other providers. They now cannot pay those bills. The service units now are in a bind, if they can't borrow money. Their only recourse, when they run out of money, is to terminate the service which many are now doing. Certainly this release of two million dollars, and Senator Stull, I would like to say now, that two million dollars is out of already appropriated money. It would come from that remaining 5.3 million dollars. There is no new money here. This is a vehicle, in my judgment, to keep special education ongoing, to provide the program that the Legislature said they wanted to provide for special education. A number of you have contacted me on numerous occasions saying, why don't we do something about it. The money has got to go out. We have got to do the job. Here's a solution. Here is a way we can get the money out. It is legal. It is defensible. Again, we are not going to overpay anyone that we can't recoup it from. I say to you, here is a way to temporarily resolve the problem and I hope that we get on the long range solution of the problem that I know that you want and I want but, as for now and as for today in terms of continuing to provide special education money so that we do not emasculate the program, this is a solution to do it and, Mr. Chairman, I respectfully ask that the Legislature advance this bill to General File and expedite it.

PRESIDENT: The question is, shall LB 555 as amended be advanced to E & R Initial. Record your vote. Would you record your vote, please. Record the vote, Mr. Clerk.

CLERK: 29 ayes, 9 nays, 11 not voting.

PRESIDENT: LB 555 as amended is advanced. Senator Lewis.

SENATOR LEWIS: Within that motion, I asked to expedite. Is that necessary, Mr. Clerk, to have a vote on that? Mr. Chairman, I move that LB 555 be expedited.

PRESIDENT: The motion is...is there unanimous consent? Seeing no objection. The motion to expedite carries, unanimous consent having been asked. There is a Resolution on the desk. Could we have your undivided attention on this very important Resolution, please?

CLERK: Legislative Resolution #16. Introduced by Senator Bereuter of the 24th District. Read. See Page 606, Journal. A motion on the desk, Mr. President, I move to suspend the